

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Linda Sánchez and Congressman Jack Quinn (R-NY) today announced the introduction of the "Bullying Prevention for School Safety and Crime Reduction Act of 2003," H.R. 3692, a bi-partisan bill to help stop bullying in our schools.

"For too long, bullying has been a problem that has been overlooked. The consequences of ignoring this problem are very serious. Bullying and teasing are cited as the top school troubles of students aged 8-15. According to a report from the Kaiser Family Foundation, 55% of children aged 8-to-11 and 68% of children aged 12-to-15 view bullying and teasing as a big problem for people their age in school," explained Congresswoman Linda Sánchez.

Earlier this year, Congresswoman Linda Sánchez introduced the "School Safety and Violence Protection Act," (HR 2651) which would create a new federal grant program to fight bullying. The newest legislation, the "Bullying Prevention for School Safety and Crime Reduction Act of 2003," will expand the Department of Education's "Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act" and the Department of Justice's "Juvenile Accountability Block Grant" to authorize funds to be used for bullying prevention programs.

The legislation has the support of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a bipartisan, non-profit organization of police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and crime victims dedicated to preventing crime and violence by finding ways to prevent kids from becoming criminals. The group recently completed a study titled, "Bullying Prevention Is Crime Prevention," that found children who are the victims of bullying are more likely to commit suicide, and bullies are more likely to become criminals as adults.

"Studies have shown that the academic performance and safety of our children increases when anti-bullying efforts are part of a school's curriculum," said Rep. Jack Quinn. "As a former teacher, I know firsthand that schoolchildren who feel that they are in a safe and secure learning environment are more likely to achieve academic success and perform at a higher standard. Passage of this bill will help schools in Western New York and across America reduce incidences of violence and bullying, ensuring a brighter future for all our children."

The Sánchez/Quinn bill creates new options for schools to finance proven bullying prevention programs and helps in the development of models for school and community safety across the country.

"It is essential that we ensure a safe environment for our children where they can learn and succeed without fear, hurt or intimidation," concluded Congresswoman Linda Sánchez.